Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of:	)
	)
Amendment of Part 0 of the Commission's Rules	)
to Delegate Authority to the Wireless	)
Telecommunications Bureau Concerning	)
Procedures for Assigning Domestic Maritime	)
Mobile Service Identities (MMSIs)	)
	)

ORDER

Adopted: November 24, 1999 **Released:** December 15, 1999

By the Commission:

1.1 On March 6, 1997, we released a Public Notice[1] stating that we were considering revising the procedures governing the assignment of maritime mobile service identities (MMSIs).[2] We stated that we were considering privatizing the issuance of MMSIs by providing blocks of numbers to qualified entities for distribution to ship vessel operators. By this Public Notice, we invited qualified parties to express their interest in participating in distributing MMSIs to ship vessel operators.

1.2 Our objective was to establish a procedure whereby certain private sector entities would (1) issue an MMSI to any U.S. vessel operator; (2) collect and store information in an electronic database about each vessel issued an MMSI; and, (3) provide database access to the U.S. Coast Guard. We stated that technical details for this procedure (*e.g.*, where the MMSI database will reside, and how to ensure database access for all parties) would be developed upon mutual agreement between the participants, the Commission, and the U.S. Coast Guard.[3] We have received letters from seven parties[4] expressing interest in issuing domestic MMSIs and supporting our effort to privatize the procedures for issuing domestic MMSIs. We believe that multiple entities will allow increased options for vessel operators to choose an MMSI and that competition between the entities will help insure reasonable fees.

---

[1] *Public Notice*, FCC Seeks Comment Regarding Revision of Procedures for Assigning Maritime Mobile Service Identities, FCC 97-69, 13 FCC Rcd 9177 (1997). (*MMSI Public Notice*).

[2] An MMSI is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the Commission to commercial and recreational U.S. vessels participating in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). As required by treaty, the Commission assigns MMSIs in accordance with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations and periodically notifies the ITU of assignments made to vessels traveling or communicating internationally.

[3] *MMSI Public Notice* at 2.

[4] The seven entities are National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA), Seacoast Electronics, Inc., Globe Wireless, SEA, Inc., Murray Cohen, BoatUS, and WJG MariTel Corp.

1.3 In order to expedite the issuing of domestic MMSIs by private entities, we are amending Section 0.331 to delegate authority to the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau to enter into written agreements on a nondiscriminatory basis with qualified entities who desire to issue domestic MMSIs. The form and general terms of these agreements will be announced at a later date by Public Notice, as well as the names and addresses of entities with whom we have entered into written agreements. This list of entities will be updated and announced by Public Notice as necessary. This delegation of authority will reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and processing delays for both the maritime community and the Commission and allow us to expedite the issuing of domestic MMSIs.

1.4 Our decision to delegate authority to the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau is procedural in nature and therefore is not subject to the notice and comment and effective date requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 553(b)(A), (d); Kessler v. FCC, 326 F.2d 673 (D.C. Cir. 1963).

V. ORDERING CLAUSES

1.5 Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to the authority contained in Sections 4(i) and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i) and 303(r), Part 0 of the Commission's Rules IS AMENDED as set forth in the Appendix below, effective upon the adoption date of this *Order*.

1.6 For further information concerning this proceeding, contact James Shaffer, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, (202) 418-0680.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary

ATTACHMENT

APPENDIX

Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 0 and 80, are amended as follows:

Part 0 -- Commission organization

1. The authority citation for Part 0 continues to read as follows:

AUTHORITY: Secs. 5, 48 Stat. 1068, as amended; 47 U.S.C. 155.

2. Section 0.131(n) is revised to read as follows:

§ 0.131 Functions of the Bureau.

*****

(n) Administers the Commission's commercial radio operator (part 13 of this chapter) and amateur radio programs (part 97 of this chapter) and the program for construction, marking and lighting of antenna structures (part 17 of this chapter) and the issuing maritime mobile service identities (MMSIs).